

HUMAN NEEDS AND GLOBAL RESOURCES

Alumni **Newsletter**

FALL 2017 ISSUE

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**HUMAN NEEDS AND
GLOBAL RESOURCES**



Wheaton College
For Christ and His Kingdom

Learning to accompany communities worldwide toward justice and fullness of life



Reflection

Laurel Bornman | HNGR '16

At the beginning of June 2016, I arrived in Zambia. As I said goodbyes in November, friends asked me when I would return. I was not sure when or how a visit would happen, particularly because it is expensive and I am facing student loan repayment. Several friends confidently assured me of my return. One stated, "If God wills it, God will make a way." I nodded, doubtful about the likelihood of my return and that God cares about my travels. Seven months later, I returned for two weeks.

Honestly, I did not intend to return. My experience with HNGR was full of questions and doubts which deepened upon my return to Wheaton College. As a missionary kid and high school short term mission trip goer, I doubt the value of both short and long term mission work. At twenty-two, I do not know what I want my life to look like, let alone how it will. HNGR made me doubt the validity of many forms of helping. My growing understanding of my privilege further complicates the idea of living in another country and visiting just to visit. My mobility is extravagant. To summarize, my questions about how to live left me confident I ought to live in the USA with friends for a while and continue asking these questions and others outside of Wheaton College.

A week after graduation I began working full-time as a family manager (read nanny + personal assistant, aka personal shopper and errand runner). To my surprise, my employers were traveling to Zambia in July. They invited me to come along. After some confusion and processing with Dr. Yoder, some HNGR friends, my parents, and the friends with whom I live (just an Enneagram Six looking for guidance and support), I decided I would work to quiet my cynical side and embrace the trip as the gift that it was.

For two weeks I was with my employers - exploring Lusaka, enjoying delicious meals and fancy hotels, learning about two NGOs, going on safari drives in Mufue, and playing tons of UNO (aka nannying). I embraced the excuse of work; I was not choosing our activities, I simply enjoyed them. We parted at the airport as my employer had suggested I take a few days at the end of the trip to visit my friends. I spent one night catching up with April Sylvester (HNGR grad working in Zambia) and two friends at a Lusaka guesthouse. In the morning I hopped on the Powertools bus from Lusaka to Kitwe. Nearly eight hours later, I was with my sweet friend Keturah in Kitwe!

With travel, I had just two full days in Kitwe. My host family made me my favorite Zambian meal (relish of beans in addition to chicken for this vegetarian-leaning person). My generous supervisor Prisca Kambole hosted me in her home and let me invite Keturah and Hayley (current HNGR intern at PLAEP) for a sleepover. I made pancakes for Prisca and brownies for friends and co-workers. I held my host family's newborn Peggy and watched her brothers Wana and Phil dance around the living room with big smiles. I even watched a bit of soap operas on my favorite channel Zee World. I felt loved by my community in Kitwe.

I saw PLAEP's new spacious offices with a lovely yard and learned co-workers now often cook and eat lunch together. I saw the construction at the community school: the security fence surrounding the courtyard, the second classroom building (which had received funding during my internship) nearly finished, the bathrooms painted and ready for use, the feeding program continuing, and a new recycling program where students collect plastics. I learned about ongoing projects, including the continued growth of community savings groups. I saw again the importance of commitment to place. Staying matters.

Just before my flight from Ndola, I met up with Camille (current HNGR intern with the Jubilee Center) and Dr. Kalantzis (her visiting professor) for a lovely breakfast. As I left for the airport, Dr. Kalantzis commented on how I seemed to be doing better. Dr. Kalantzis saw me at multiple lows. He listened as I ugly cried multiple times at the HoneyRock retreat for returned interns. He saw my frustrated face and heard my persistent questions throughout Christian Thought and book club. I am feeling steadier. I have had more free time in the last four months than I've had since early high school. I am living in community, with four friends from Wheaton College and with several HNGR friends nearby. I am grateful for work and having all that I need and more. I am asking some questions, but letting many others rest. I go to church on Sundays, but let the other spiritual disciplines be. I read, but not the books that get me stuck.

Someday soon life will be busy. Someday soon I will need to decide whether to stay or to go. Someday soon relationships will change. Someday soon I will challenge myself with questions more. For now, I am grateful for

a bit of rest and working to care for the people around me - at work, but especially at home. I bake bread and mow the lawn and call my parents. This is choosing this place for now. This is loving my community now. These are two values I was reminded of during my July visit. Yes, the questions matter. But I really respect people who choose community and who stay.

Before going back to Zambia, I was nervous about the trip. But since returning, the only way I can describe it is a gift. The generosity of my employers got me across the many miles. The generosity of my host family, of friends, of Prisca reminded me of the kindness I received throughout my internship. I did not feel the stress to experience enough or reflect deeply. I simply was me for two short days and that was a gift. In letting go some of my questions and doubts, I was reminded of the value of community and place. My mobility is extravagant, but it is also a gift. My mobility connects me to people in Zambia and in Pennsylvania. My mobility has given me the opportunity to learn from people in several countries and many cities. I am still learning how to steward my mobility, but I am also working to embrace it as a gift. 🍃



Laurel reconnecting with her host family.



Children of God

Collin Flake | Current HNGR Intern

“What are you reading?” Taufik asks over coffee. A train whistle punctuates his question, echoing off the high ceiling of Stasiun Gambir in downtown Jakarta. “The beatitudes,” I say. I flip around my HNGR Book of Common Prayer so that he can read it. “Look, ‘blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.’” I smile: “that’s you.” He smiles back: “that’s us.” I guess that makes us brothers. Taufik is a Muslim. He is my co-worker and friend at an organization called Peace Generation based in Bandung, Indonesia. Peace Generation promotes peace throughout Indonesia by training teachers and community leaders, equipping them to transform Indonesian youth into activists for peace. Their approach seeks to stem the global spread of violent extremism and to energize Indonesia’s rising generation to work together across ethnic, religious, and class lines in order to ensure a more peaceful future. So . . . you might say the purpose of my HNGR internship is to make children.

But what exactly is peacemaking? If you’re like me, you might often think of peace as a vague and wishful concept. And yet, for the men and women I’ve had the privilege of working with over the past three months, “world peace” is not a dream relegated to the imaginations of hippies and beauty contestants. It’s their life’s work. And my time living with and learning from Indonesian “Children of God” has given me a few reflections on just how one might go about achieving it.

The last time Canon Andrew White visited campus, I had the chance to ask him a few questions about peacemaking. White, whom Wheaton (me included) loves almost as much as he “LOVES Wheaton,” is the Anglican bishop of Baghdad whose congregation regularly experiences violence and persecution. I

asked him how he goes about teaching peace. His answer was simple: “people have to come face-to-face with those they don’t understand and may even hate.” My time at Peace Generation has taught me that a peace education curriculum in classrooms can be effective at equipping youth with the skills they need in order to interpret experiences with the “other” in a productive way, but these experiences in the classroom have to energize and challenge people towards real-world relationships. In this, I have come to see Canon White’s wisdom: peacemaking is, like every legitimate ministry, relational. It is building and restoring relationships. We have a natural tendency to avoid intimacy with those we see as different from us. But the gospel calls us into those hard (but ultimately rewarding) relationships, even when those relationships seem irreparably broken by a history of separation or violence. Especially then.

Additionally, I think peacemaking involves the act of seeing rightly. It requires us to withhold judgment while we listen and give others the chance to speak for themselves. Because maybe those guys in military uniforms that your friend just described in broken English as “like religious police” aren’t terrorists after all; maybe their uniforms mark them as members of a group devoted to opposing terrorism and even helping guard churches on holidays like Christmas. Purely a hypothetical, of course.

And when we fail to allow others to tell the stories of their own communities, we risk seeing wrongly. Which, incidentally, is where the Devil gains most of his power. Let’s examine, for instance, the phrase “radical Islamic terrorism,” which I have come to dislike for more reasons than the frequency with which it’s used to legitimize retributive violence that

often harms innocents. The primary reason I have come to dislike it is that it is inaccurate. Perhaps we should ask ourselves what exactly a radical Muslim does. He prays five times a day, usually for the first time at about 4:30 AM. He fasts. He gives to the poor. He is radically hospitable. Taufik, my host family, and the friends I've made at the Muslim boarding school where I live are radical Muslims. If someone were to murder others in the name of religion, we would certainly call him radical, but we cannot call him radically Islamic in any sense endorsed by the vast majority of the world's 1.8 billion Muslims.



Collin at a meal with his host family.

Lastly, peacemaking is about hope. Perhaps the greatest factor that pushes people to join violent extremist groups is a deep sense of hopelessness. This is evidenced by these organizations' tendencies to target the most vulnerable: in Indonesia, most ISIS recruits are women and children. Thus, to spread peace is to spread a message of hope. The Old Testament speaks of shalom, a peace that consists of restored relationship with self, God, others, and creation. Shalom is a vision of swords being beaten into plowshares and lions and wolves lying down together. Muslims have a similar concept in the word Salam, which Indonesian Muslims invoke almost every time they enter a home or stand up to address a group. In his ministry, Jesus proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom of God, and it is a central focus of the only prayer He gave his followers. Shalom, Salam, the Kingdom: this is the hope we offer the world as the Children of God. To close, it may be worth us Wheaton students asking: what exactly does a radical Christian do? It seems to me she might pray "Thy Kingdom come," and then let God use her to make it so. And that, my fellow Wheaties, is peacemaking. 🍃



Collin's visit to an Indonesian elementary school.

Salam dari Indonesia,

COLLIN

Collin is a senior BITH and Philosophy major. At Wheaton, he has been a member of the Wheaton College Debate Team, a DSG leader, a passionate HoneyRock lover, and the former RA of 3East in Fischer.

SAVE THE DATE: HNGR SYMPOSIUM | MARCH 13-16, 2018

For the Healing of the Nations

SPEAKERS: *Dr. Francisco Moraga and Dr. Reyna Sanchez | Luke Society Nicaragua
Dr. Rebecca Heidkamp | Johns Hopkins University
Ms. Catherine Coleman Flowers | Alabama Center for Rural Enterprise*

A joint HNGR/Science Symposium on global health and the environment. You'll be receiving details soon, but we encourage you to put the dates on your calendar. Let us know if you're already planning to participate: email hngr@wheaton.edu or call (630) 752-5199.





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2017 Interns in the Field

Please continue to keep the 2017 interns in your prayers as they finish out their HNGR internships around the world!